

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 10-12, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 19-21 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 7, 14 and 18 as follows.

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a recording ~~means for storing~~ device configured to store an image file including an image area for storing image data and also including an attribute area for storing attribute information;

a description ~~means for describing~~ device configured to describe the attribute information using a tag ~~tags~~ defined by a tag-definable markup language;

an encryption-and-compression ~~means for encrypting and compressing~~ device configured to encrypt and compress part or all of the tagged attribute information described by the description ~~means~~ device; and

a writing ~~means for writing~~ device configured to write the attribute information encrypted and compressed by the encryption-and-compression ~~means~~ device into an arbitrary attribute area;

a separation device configured to separate image data and attribute information included in the stored image file;

a decompression-and-decryption device configured to decompress and decrypt the encrypted and compressed part of the attribute information separated by the separation means;

an extraction device is configured to selectively extract attribute information by analyzing the tags of the decompressed and decrypted tagged attribute information; and
a display device configured to display the image and the selectively-extracted tagged attribute information.

8 - 13 (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising the steps of:
storing an image file including an image area for storing image data and also including an attribute area for storing attribute information;

describing the attribute information using ~~a tag~~ tags defined by a tag-definable markup language;

encrypting and compressing part or all of the tagged attribute information described in the description step; ~~and~~

writing the tagged attribute information encrypted and compressed in the encryption-and-compression step into an arbitrary attribute area;

separating image data and attribute information included in the stored image file;
decompressing and decrypting the encrypted and compressed part of the attribute information separated by the separation step;

selectively extracting attribute information by analyzing the tags of the decompressed and decrypted tagged attribute information; and displaying the image and the selectively-extracted tagged attribute information.

15-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A program, stored in a computer-readable storage medium, for causing a computer to execute a procedure comprising the steps of:

- storing an image file including an image area for storing image data and also including an attribute area for storing attribute information;
- describing the attribute information using ~~a tag~~ tags defined by a tag-definable markup language;
- encrypting and compressing part or all of the tagged attribute information described in the description step;
- separating image data and attribute information included in the stored image file;
- decompressing and decrypting the encrypted and compressed part of the attribute information separated by the separation means;
- selectively extracting attribute information by analyzing the tags of the decompressed and decrypted tagged attribute information; and
- displaying the image and the selectively-extracted tagged attribute information.

19 - 21 (Canceled)